

programme of out-of-school activities is provided. There were 16 boys in residence at this school at 31st March. The situation of this school is hardly the best, but the present buildings were available and the Department hopes as soon as circumstances permit to secure more suitable premises in another locality.

Fareham House, Featherston.—This institution was opened during the year to provide for older Maori girls who require a period of institutional training prior to placement. Considerable alterations are required to the building, and in the meantime the number which can be accommodated is limited. Since the opening of this institution in August last 18 girls have been admitted. After a period of training, depending upon the capabilities and response of the individual girls, they are placed in suitable situations where their supervision is continued under the local Child Welfare Officers. The programme includes domestic work in all its branches, in-door crafts, gardening, and small farming.

NEW INSTITUTIONS

Fareham House, for Maori girls, was opened during the year.

It is hoped that the new receiving home in Palmerston North will be opened shortly.

Hokio Beach School, referred to previously, was reopened during the year.

Inquiries are being continued with a view to establishing a hostel for working girls in Auckland, and also another institution to make possible the better classification of older delinquent boys.

PLACEMENT IN FOSTER-HOMES

It has been the policy of the Department for well over half a century to place children in selected private homes in the community where removal from their homes is necessary. As stated elsewhere, only a very few of the children under the Department's care require institutional training. Owing to social conditions arising out of the war, difficulties have been experienced in securing a sufficient number of suitable homes. It is hoped, however, that with the return to normal this condition will no longer obtain. It is essential to have an adequate choice of suitable homes so that the right one may be available for each individual child. This is one of the most urgent needs of the Branch, and cannot be emphasized too strongly. The children so placed attend the ordinary schools and enter into the life of the community in the same way as other children living in their own homes. The Department owes a debt of gratitude to the many foster-parents who over a long period of years have continued to provide homes for our State wards. The teachers of both primary and post-primary schools, the Church organizations, honorary Child Welfare Officers, and many private organizations and individuals lend their aid in furthering the interests of these young people. The children are visited regularly by the Child Welfare Officers to ensure that conditions are satisfactory. Careful inquiry is made before any child is placed in a foster-home, but, even so, there must be some failures, and it is by frequent contacts with the home and the child that the Department endeavours to maintain a high standard of foster-home placement. It is satisfactory to record that only in rare instances is it found necessary to remove a child from a foster-home which has deteriorated or has otherwise become unsuitable for the particular child placed therein. With a greater choice of foster-homes, much more could be done towards attaining the ideal of having each child placed in the home most suited to his particular needs.

I sincerely trust that those parents who can provide suitably for another child in their homes will do so and thus perform one of the finest services which they can render to society.

There were 1,976 children placed in foster-homes at 31st March.

EDUCATION

With the exception of a small number of children whose education is provided for at institutions, State wards attend the ordinary schools in the community. Children who show ability are given the opportunity of receiving post-primary and higher education.

At 31st March, 280 of the children placed in foster-homes were receiving post-primary education and 8 Maori children were residential pupils at Maori colleges.

PLACEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT

With the few exceptions of those who are not capable physically or mentally of competing on equal terms with their fellows, all receive standard rates of wages. In the few cases where they do not, the Child Welfare Officers obtain under-rate workers' permits through the local officers of the Labour Department. A portion of the child's wages is banked to his credit and he is provided with pocket-money, which is increased from time to time until eventually before his discharge he is receiving the whole of his wages personally.

I wish to thank the Vocational Guidance Officers for the valuable assistance which they gave in certain cases in helping to place children suitably.

Included in the children placed in employment are a number who are handicapped in one way or another, and the Department appreciates the interest and kindly treatment accorded by the employers to these young people.

NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

At the 31st March, 1945, there were 1,152 State wards (727 boys and 425 girls) in employment. Of these, 77 (65 boys and 12 girls) were apprenticed to various trades, and of the total number 348 (192 boys and 156 girls) were receiving assistance from the Department. Boys were employed as follows: farm hands, 393; factory employees, 102; shop assistants, 35; labourers, 35; carpenters, 28; clerks, 14; and the remainder—120—in various other occupations. Girls were employed as follows: domestics, 181; factory hands, 90; shop assistants, 36; clerks, 26; typists, 17; nurses, 9; and the remainder—66—in various other occupations.